

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated April 28, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response extended one month to expire on August 28, 2003. Claims 1-23 are pending in the application and stand rejected. Applicants have amended the claims to correct matters of form and for reasons discussed below. Applicants have also added new claims 25-30. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12, 17-19 and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,186,722 (*Shirai*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,746,562 (*Hasegawa et al.*). Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,186,722 (*Shirai*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,746,562 (*Hasegawa, et al.*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,032,419 (*Hurwitt*). The Examiner states that *Shirai* discloses the claimed invention except that it fails to teach either of the first and second processing chamber as adjustably mounted to the transfer chamber using means such as a bellows assembly. The Examiner states that *Hasegawa et al.* teaches the use of a bellows assembly to seal portions between two chambers where previous evacuation of the chambers has caused elastic deformation. The Examiner, therefore, asserts that it would have been obvious to provide bellows assemblies for one or both of the first and second processing chambers in *Shirai* "in order to elastically gas tightly seal the portions between two chambers where previous evacuation of the chambers has caused elastic deformation of either of the chambers and damage to the positional relationships of components inside the chamber cause an adverse affect on sample transfer precision as taught by *Hasegawa et al.*" Regarding base claim 9, the Examiner states that a combination of *Shirai* and *Hasegawa et al.* fail to teach using a slit valve as a sealing means, but *Hurwitt* teaches using a slit valve for isolating a process chamber and a transfer chamber. The Examiner, therefore, asserts that it would have been obvious to use the slit valve in the combination of *Shirai* and *Hasegawa et al.* "In order to isolate a process chamber and a transfer chamber as taught by *Hurwitt*."

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants believe the Examiner misinterpreted the Applicants' claimed invention. An adjusting mechanism positions the chambers relative to one another, not the bellows assembly. An adjusting mechanism, such as the one shown and described in the specification with reference to Figures 2-6, directs and adjusts the movement of the chamber attached thereto. The bellows assembly simply responds to the movement provided by the mechanism and maintains a hermetically sealed wafer passageway. The bellows assembly is not the driving force for the movement, contrary to the Examiner's assertion. *Hasegawa* does not intend to cause any relative movement. The whole purpose of his invention is to prevent relative movement. Col. 2, lines 5-8; 29-31; col. 4, lines 22-26; and col. 8, lines 28-36.

Applicants have amended base claims 1, 7, 17, and 24 to more clearly recite the intended mechanism described above. Neither *Shirai*, *Hurwitt*, nor *Hasegawa et al.*, alone or in combination, motivate or suggest a mechanism that selectively positions the second chamber, as recited in the base claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Shirai* and *Hasegawa, et al.* as applied to claims 1, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12, 17-19 and 21-24 above, and further in view of European Patent No. 480735 A (*Selbrede*). Claims 5 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Shirai* and *Hasegawa, et al.* as applied to claims 1, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12, 17-19 and 21-24 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,611,861 (*Higashi*). Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Higashi* as applied to claims 5 and 13-16 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,854,611 (*Press*). Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Shirai*, *Hasegawa, et al.*, and *Hurwitt* as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,854,611 (*Press*). Claims 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Shirai* and *Hasegawa, et al.* as applied to claims 1, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12, 17-19 and 21-24 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,854,611 (*Press*).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Each of these claims depend from one of the base claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 17, or 24 discussed above, and includes each of the limitations in the claim from which it depends. Accordingly, the Applicants'

argument stated above equally applies to these rejections. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest the claimed invention. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

The prior art made of record is noted. However, it is believed that the secondary references are no more pertinent to the Applicants' disclosure than the primary references cited in the office action. Therefore, it is believed that a detailed discussion of the secondary references is not deemed necessary for a full and complete response to this office action. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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